In the Claims:

Please amend claim 4 as follows:

4. A friction clutch mechanism, ~~as recited in claim 3, wherein~~ for use in a friction clutch type draft gear assembly, said friction clutch mechanism comprising:

(a) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing member,

said inner surface of each of said outer stationary plate members includes a first elongated slot and a first lubricating insert member disposed within said first elongated slot to prevent detrimental sticking of said friction clutch mechanism after closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly and during a release cycle thereof, said first lubricating insert members are formed from a mixture of a pre-selected lubricating metal and at least 2% graphite;

(b) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said pair of outer stationary plate members for absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy

generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly;

(c) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each of said inner stationary plate members having an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with at least a portion of a respective inner surface of said pair of movable plate members for absorbing at least a second portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner stationary plate members being tapered at a first predetermined angle;

(d) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge shoe members including

(i) a tapered outer surface frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said tapered stationary plate members for absorbing a third portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly,

(ii) an upper surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism, said tapered upper surface being tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and about 50.0°, and

(iii) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism; and

(e) a center wedge member, said center wedge member including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for absorbing at least a fourth portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly.

Please amend claim 6 as follows:

6. A friction clutch mechanism~~, as recited in claim 5,~~ for use in a friction clutch type draft gear assembly, said friction clutch mechanism comprising:

(a) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing member;

(b) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said pair of outer stationary plate members for absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly;

(c) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each of said inner stationary plate members having an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with at least a portion of a respective inner surface of said pair of movable plate members for absorbing at least a second portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner stationary plate members being tapered at a first predetermined angle, said outer surface of each of said tapered plates includes a second elongated slot and a second lubricating insert member disposed within said second elongated slot to prevent detrimental sticking of said friction clutch mechanism after closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly and during a release cycle thereof, said second lubricating insert members are formed from a mixture of a pre-selected lubricating metal and at least 2% graphite;

(d) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge shoe members including

(i) a tapered outer surface frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said tapered stationary plate members for absorbing a third portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly,

(ii) an upper surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism, said tapered upper surface being tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and about 50.0°, and

(iii) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism; and

(e) a center wedge member, said center wedge member including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for absorbing at least a fourth portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly.

Please amend claim 8 as follows:

8. A friction clutch mechanism~~, as recited in claim 7, wherein~~ for use in a friction clutch type draft gear assembly, said friction clutch mechanism comprising:

(a) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing member;

(b) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said pair of outer stationary plate members for absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly;

(c) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each of said inner stationary plate members having an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with at least a portion of a respective inner surface of said pair of movable plate members for absorbing at least a second portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear

assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner stationary plate members being tapered at a first predetermined angle;

(d) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge shoe members including

(i) a tapered outer surface frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said tapered stationary plate members for absorbing a third portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly,

(ii) an upper surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism, said tapered upper surface being tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and about 50.0°, and

(iii) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism

(iv) said outer tapered surface of each of said wedge shoe members includes a third elongated slot and a third lubricating insert member located within said third elongated slot to prevent detrimental sticking of said friction clutch mechanism

after closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly and during a release cycle thereof said third lubricating insert members are formed from a mixture of a pre-selected lubricating metal and at least 2% graphite; and

(e) a center wedge member, said center wedge member including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for absorbing at least a fourth portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly.

Please amend claim 15 as follows:

15. A high capacity friction clutch type draft gear assembly~~, as recited in claim 14, wherein~~ for absorbing both buff and draft loads being applied to a center sill member of a railway car during make-up of a train consist and in-track operation of such train consist, said friction clutch type draft gear assembly comprising:

(a) a housing member having an end wall for closing a first end thereof, said housing member being open at a radially opposed second end thereof:

(b) a compressible cushioning means disposed within a cavity of said housing member abutting at least a portion of an

inner surface of said end wall disposed at said first end of said housing member, said compressible cushioning means extending longitudinally from said first end;

(c) a friction clutch mechanism disposed at least partially within said open end of said housing member, said friction clutch mechanism including;

(i) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing member, said inner surface of each of said outer stationary plate members include a first elongated slot and a first lubricating insert member disposed within said first elongated slot to prevent detrimental sticking of said friction clutch mechanism after closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly and during a release cycle thereof, said first lubricating insert members are formed from a mixture of a pre-selected lubricating metal and at least 2% graphite;

(ii) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an outer surface thereof frictionally

engageable with a respective said inner surface of said pair of outer stationary plate members for absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly;

(iii) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each of said inner stationary plate members having an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with at least a portion of a respective inner surface of said pair of movable plate members for absorbing at least a second portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner stationary plate members being tapered at a first predetermined angle;

(iv) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge shoe members including

(a) a tapered outer surface frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said tapered stationary plate members for absorbing a third portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly,

(b) an upper surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism, said tapered upper surface being tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and about 50.0°, and

(c) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism; and

(v) a center wedge member, said center wedge member including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for absorbing at least a fourth portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly; and

(d) a spring seat member having at least a portion of a first surface thereof abutting the opposite end of said compressible cushioning means and a second surface for engaging predetermined portions of said friction clutch mechanism, said spring seat member being mounted to move longitudinally within

said housing for respectively compressing and releasing said compressible cushioning means during application and release of a force on said draft gear assembly.

Please amend claim 17 as follows:

17. A high capacity friction clutch type draft gear assembly~~, as recited in claim 16, wherein~~ for absorbing both buff and draft loads being applied to a center sill member of a railway car during make-up of a train consist and in-track operation of such train consist, said friction clutch type draft gear assembly comprising:

(a) a housing member having an end wall for closing a first end thereof, said housing member being open at a radially opposed second end thereof:

(b) a compressible cushioning means disposed within a cavity of said housing member abutting at least a portion of an inner surface of said end wall disposed at said first end of said housing member, said compressible cushioning means extending longitudinally from said first end;

(c) a friction clutch mechanism disposed at least partially within said open end of said housing member, said friction clutch mechanism including;

(i) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing member;

(ii) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said pair of outer stationary plate members for absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly;

(iii) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each of said inner stationary plate members having an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with at least a portion of a respective inner surface of said pair of movable plate members for absorbing at least a second portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner stationary plate members being tapered at a first predetermined angle, said outer surface of each of

said tapered plates includes a second elongated slot and a second lubricating insert member disposed within said second elongated slot to prevent detrimental sticking of said friction clutch mechanism after closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly and during a release cycle thereof said second lubricating insert members are formed from a mixture of a pre-selected lubricating metal and at least 2% graphite ;

(iv) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge shoe members including

(a) a tapered outer surface frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said tapered stationary plate members for absorbing a third portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly,

(b) an upper surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism, said tapered upper surface being tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and about 50.0°, and

(c) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism; and

(v) a center wedge member, said center wedge member including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for absorbing at least a fourth portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly; and

(d) a spring seat member having at least a portion of a first surface thereof abutting the opposite end of said compressible cushioning means and a second surface for engaging predetermined portions of said friction clutch mechanism, said spring seat member being mounted to move longitudinally within said housing for respectively compressing and releasing said compressible cushioning means during application and release of a force on said draft gear assembly.

Amended Claims

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) A friction clutch mechanism, ~~as recited in claim 3, wherein~~ for use in a friction clutch type draft gear assembly, said friction clutch mechanism comprising:

(a) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing member,

said inner surface of each of said outer stationary plate members includes a first elongated slot and a first lubricating insert member disposed within said first elongated slot to prevent detrimental sticking of said friction clutch mechanism after closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly and during a release cycle thereof, said first lubricating

insert members are formed from a mixture of a pre-selected lubricating metal and at least 2% graphite;

(b) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said pair of outer stationary plate members for absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly;

(c) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each of said inner stationary plate members having an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with at least a portion of a respective inner surface of said pair of movable plate members for absorbing at least a second portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner stationary plate members being tapered at a first predetermined angle;

(d) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge shoe members including

(i) a tapered outer surface frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said tapered stationary plate members for absorbing a third portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly,

(ii) an upper surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism, said tapered upper surface being tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and about 50.0°, and

(iii) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism; and

(e) a center wedge member, said center wedge member including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for absorbing at least a fourth portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) A friction clutch mechanism~~, as recited in claim 5,~~ for use in a friction clutch type draft gear assembly, said friction clutch mechanism comprising:

(a) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing member;

(b) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said pair of outer stationary plate members for absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly;

(c) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each of said inner stationary plate members having an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with at least a portion of a respective inner surface of said pair of movable plate members for absorbing at least a second portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner stationary plate members being tapered at a first predetermined angle, said outer surface of each of said tapered plates includes a second elongated slot and a second lubricating insert member disposed within said second elongated slot to prevent detrimental

sticking of said friction clutch mechanism after closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly and during a release cycle thereof, said second lubricating insert members are formed from a mixture of a pre-selected lubricating metal and at least 2% graphite;

(d) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge shoe members including

(i) a tapered outer surface frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said tapered stationary plate members for absorbing a third portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly,

(ii) an upper surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism, said tapered upper surface being tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and about 50.0°, and

(iii) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism; and

(e) a center wedge member, said center wedge member including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for absorbing at least a fourth portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly.

7. Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A friction clutch mechanism~~, as recited in claim 7,~~ ~~wherein~~ for use in a friction clutch type draft gear assembly, said friction clutch mechanism comprising:

(a) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing member;

(b) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said pair of outer stationary plate members for absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy

generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly;

(c) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each of said inner stationary plate members having an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with at least a portion of a respective inner surface of said pair of movable plate members for absorbing at least a second portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner stationary plate members being tapered at a first predetermined angle;

(d) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge shoe members including

(i) a tapered outer surface frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said tapered stationary plate members for absorbing a third portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly,

(ii) an upper surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism, said tapered upper surface being tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and about 50.0°, and

(iii) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism

(iv) said outer tapered surface of each of said wedge shoe members includes a third elongated slot and a third lubricating insert member located within said third elongated slot to prevent detrimental sticking of said friction clutch mechanism after closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly and during a release cycle thereof said third lubricating insert members are formed from a mixture of a pre-selected lubricating metal and at least 2% graphite; and

(e) a center wedge member, said center wedge member including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for absorbing at least a fourth portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) A high capacity friction clutch type draft gear assembly~~, as recited in claim 14, wherein~~ for absorbing both buff and draft loads being applied to a center sill member of a railway car during make-up of a train consist and in-track operation of such train consist, said friction clutch type draft gear assembly comprising:

(a) a housing member having an end wall for closing a first end thereof, said housing member being open at a radially opposed second end thereof:

(b) a compressible cushioning means disposed within a cavity of said housing member abutting at least a portion of an inner surface of said end wall disposed at said first end of said housing member, said compressible cushioning means extending longitudinally from said first end;

(c) a friction clutch mechanism disposed at least partially within said open end of said housing member, said friction clutch mechanism including;

(i) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing member, said inner surface of each of said outer stationary plate members include a first elongated slot and a first lubricating insert member disposed within said first elongated slot to prevent detrimental sticking of said friction clutch mechanism after closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly and during a release cycle thereof, said first lubricating insert members are formed from a mixture of a pre-selected lubricating metal and at least 2% graphite;

(ii) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said pair of outer stationary plate members for absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy

generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly;

(iii) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each of said inner stationary plate members having an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with at least a portion of a respective inner surface of said pair of movable plate members for absorbing at least a second portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner stationary plate members being tapered at a first predetermined angle;

(iv) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge shoe members including

(a) a tapered outer surface frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said tapered stationary plate members for absorbing a third portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly,

(b) an upper surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch

mechanism, said tapered upper surface being tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and about 50.0°, and

(c) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism; and

(v) a center wedge member, said center wedge member including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for absorbing at least a fourth portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly; and

(d) a spring seat member having at least a portion of a first surface thereof abutting the opposite end of said compressible cushioning means and a second surface for engaging predetermined portions of said friction clutch mechanism, said spring seat member being mounted to move longitudinally within said housing for respectively compressing and releasing said compressible cushioning means during application and release of a force on said draft gear assembly.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) A high capacity friction clutch type draft gear assembly~~, as recited in claim 16, wherein~~ for absorbing both buff and draft loads being applied to a center sill member of a railway car during make-up of a train consist and in-track operation of such train consist, said friction clutch type draft gear assembly comprising:

(a) a housing member having an end wall for closing a first end thereof, said housing member being open at a radially opposed second end thereof:

(b) a compressible cushioning means disposed within a cavity of said housing member abutting at least a portion of an inner surface of said end wall disposed at said first end of said housing member, said compressible cushioning means extending longitudinally from said first end;

(c) a friction clutch mechanism disposed at least partially within said open end of said housing member, said friction clutch mechanism including;

(i) a pair of outer stationary plate members, each of said pair of outer stationary plate members having an inner and an outer surface, said outer surface being engageable with a respective radially opposed portion of an inner surface of a

draft gear housing member adjacent an open end of such housing member;

(ii) a pair of movable plate members, each of said movable plate members having at least a predetermined portion of an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said pair of outer stationary plate members for absorbing at least a first portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly;

(iii) a pair of inner stationary plate members, each of said inner stationary plate members having an outer surface thereof frictionally engageable with at least a portion of a respective inner surface of said pair of movable plate members for absorbing at least a second portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly, an inner surface of said each of said inner stationary plate members being tapered at a first predetermined angle, said outer surface of each of said tapered plates includes a second elongated slot and a second lubricating insert member disposed within said second elongated slot to prevent detrimental sticking of said friction clutch mechanism after

closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly and during a release cycle thereof said second lubricating insert members are formed from a mixture of a pre-selected lubricating metal and at least 2% graphite ;

(iv) a pair of wedge shoe members, each of said wedge shoe members including

(a) a tapered outer surface frictionally engageable with a respective said inner surface of said tapered stationary plate members for absorbing a third portion of heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly,

(b) an upper surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative to a longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism, said tapered upper surface being tapered at an angle of between about 49.0° and about 50.0°, and

(c) a bottom surface tapered from a point disposed inwardly from said tapered outer surface inwardly toward and at an acute angle relative

perpendicularly to said longitudinal axis of said friction clutch mechanism; and

(v) a center wedge member, said center wedge member including a pair of correspondingly tapered surfaces frictionally engageable with an upper tapered surface of a respective one of said pair of wedge shoe members for absorbing at least a fourth portion of such heat energy generated during closure of such friction clutch type draft gear assembly; and

(d) a spring seat member having at least a portion of a first surface thereof abutting the opposite end of said compressible cushioning means and a second surface for engaging predetermined portions of said friction clutch mechanism, said spring seat member being mounted to move longitudinally within said housing for respectively compressing and releasing said compressible cushioning means during application and release of a force on said draft gear assembly.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Cancelled)